

Client Enrichment Series (CES) RWA Digital Signature Training

Q & A



Topic: *RWA Digital Signature Training for 2017*

Dates of Presentation: May 16th & June 1st, 2017

Link to Series Information: www.gsa.gov/ces & eRETA site: www.gsa.gov/ereta

Q1) If the person creating the RWA is not the one signing, how will the RWA be routed to the signer?

A) The digital signature software (eSignLive) will send the document to your "signer" based on the email address you enter.

Q2) Are digital signatures outside of the system, i.e. on PDFs, still accepted by GSA?

A) Digital signatures outside of the eRETA application are still permissible though we encourage customers to begin the transition to utilizing the system.

Q3) Will we get a copy of the RWA once it is digitally signed by GSA?

A) Copies of the signed RWA will automatically: 1) be sent back to the signers after all signatures are applied, 2) automatically uploaded to RETA/eRETA so that anyone with access to those systems can download it at any time, and 3) emailed to all customer and GSA POCs listed on the RWA once the Acceptance Letter is sent out. In other words, the form is emailed or saved automatically in several places, no longer requiring anyone to manually save or print out copies elsewhere.

Q4) Will this help eliminate maintaining paper copies?

A) Yes this helps eliminate the need to maintain paper copies.

Q5) Will anyone who requests access to eRETA be granted access?

A) GSA will not restrict or limit eRETA access. Each individual needs to apply separately following the three step application process outlined at www.gsa.gov/ereta. The only way a user would not be granted a user ID is if they do not have an equivalent security clearance with their home agency. GSA requires their own employees to have a background check before they can access any GSA system (including GSA email), as such a reciprocal check is done to confirm the potential eRETA user had a matching clearance done for their agency.

Q6) Is it required to use eRETA's new digital signature functionality?

A) It is not required. While we encourage all to utilize the new features, customers may continue signing RWAs the same way they have done in the past.

Q7) Can more than one person have access to the same RWA? In many agencies, different people perform different tasks with their RWAs (ex. one person makes the initial IGE request, another person generates the RWA, another person signs the RWA.)

A) Yes. RWAs are managed at the Agency Bureau Code (AB Code) level. As such, if three different individuals all have access to the same AB Code, they can all edit the same RWA - just not at the same time. RWAs are locked to allow only one person to edit

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it at a time.

Q8) Will the email notification for signature include any back-up documentation such as the scope of work or IGE?

A) Not at this time. Currently, the email notification for digital signature will only include the RWA 2957 Form. The RETA/eRETA team has requested FY18 funds to enhance digital signature routing to allow GSA to route other documents in addition to the 2957 Form. In the meantime, the additional documents can be sent in a separate email to the RWA signer. Also, if the RWA signer has eRETA access, they can log into the RWA and view/download the documents directly.

Q9) How are RWA amendments processed in eRETA?

A) Amendments to RWAs are routed for signature to the Customer Approving Official just like new RWAs.

Q10) Will customers be able to edit the original RWA or will we have to create a new RWA for each amendment?

A) Once an RWA is submitted, customers may make amendments to the existing data. They would only enter changes to data that has changed. All other data is left as is. They would not have to enter all data again from scratch when entering an amendment.

Q11) Can GSA tell us more about the actual digital signature? How do customers get one? How secure is it?

A) The digital signature is unique each time it is applied. It captures the signer's name, the date timestamp, and the IP address used when signing the RWA. Signers do not "acquire" a signature to use repeatedly; each signature is unique and has a "digital footprint." Only the person who receives the digital signature email request can sign the RWA, so digital signers should not forward their signature request email to anyone else. If someone receives an RWA for signature in error, they should select the "Opt Out" button on the digital signature request and enter the required justification explaining why they are opting out. GSA will receive that information and can then re-route the RWA to the appropriate signer.

Q12) Can you copy forward a previous RWA to populate redundant fields/blocks of a new RWA and make revisions to the new RWA as needed?

A) At this time, only Overtime Utility estimates can be re-created (copy forwarded). In the future, we are looking to add "favorites" so that certain data elements (e.g. Treasury Symbols, BOACs, etc) are linked to eRETA user profiles. This would allow frequently used data elements to automatically populate on all RWAs the user create, reducing the data entry burden.

Q13) If a customer agency needs to send RWAs to multiple departments within their agency (for example, first to accounting for review, then to management for approval), is that possible?

A) The process would continue to work the same regardless if the customer signs manually or digitally. The customer's accounting office would still give its approval before management applied its signature. To sign digitally, the customer's accounting office would still review and give their approval, once they did, they could either have their management sign the RWA (manually as usual) or send the RWA to GSA with a "request to digitally sign" in block 18C. Once GSA completes page 2 of the RWA form, GSA will then route the RWA to the agency's management to digitally sign.

Q14) If the requestor enters an RWA request in eRETA and routes it to the approving

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official, does the approving official also need access to eRETA to digitally sign?

A) No, the approving official does not need access to eRETA to digitally sign (they only need an email address).

Q15) Who is the certifying authority that issues the digital signature?

A) Each agency designates their fund certifying authorities. GSA takes each customer agency at their word that the person who signs the RWA (whether they sign it with pen and ink as we have for years or if they now sign it digitally) is an individual with the authority to commit the agency to spend the funding amount indicated on the RWA. By signing an RWA, whether manually or digitally, that individual is agreeing to the terms and conditions outlined on page 3 of the RWA 2957 form. It is recommended that each agency identify who will sign RWAs and who will sign in their absence so that everyone involved with RWAs in each agency knows this information.

Q16) Has this system been approved by IRS? Most external sites are blocked.

A) eRETA and digital signature routing meet all requirements by GSA's OCIO office to be used both internally and externally. There are already many IRS employees with eRETA access, dating back to 2011 when eRETA first went live as a read only application. If, after a user obtains a user ID and password to eRETA, and then launches eRETA but cannot access it, the GSA OCIO team along with the customer agency CIO representative can communicate in an effort to make eRETA a "trusted site" on browsers within that agency.

Q17) Will digital signatures work with mobile phones?

A) Yes.

Q18) If a customer agency submits the request via eRETA, can they print out the form for their finance office to obligate and show all appropriate signatures have been completed?

A) Yes. Also, regardless of whether the customer signs the RWA manually or electronically, GSA will continue to send out the Acceptance Letter with a copy of the signed RWA 2957 Form, allowing the customer agency to obligate the amount on their books.

Q19) Is a PIV card needed for the digital signature?

A) No sign-in of any kind is required to digitally sign an RWA. Only a valid email address is needed to receive the digital signature request email from GSA for each RWA they need to sign. No special software, user ID, password, or PIV card is needed to sign RWAs.

Q20) Are digital signatures legally binding?

A) Yes, the eSign Live application provides all of the required authorities in terms of legal signatures. If you'd like some more info on that "fine print", please send an email to ereta@gsa.gov and we'll work to provide those specifics for you.

Q21) Is there a way to send an email for the completed RWA to those not in the approval chain?

A) GSA sends out the "Acceptance Letter" along with a copy of the signed RWA once all signatures are captured. This is a practice that GSA has been doing for over 7 years now and it will continue with digital signatures. The only difference is the RWA 2957 Form sent with the Acceptance Letter will now display digital signatures instead of manual signatures.

Q22) Will the requester know at all times what stage or where the RWA is in the process,

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i.e when it is sent for digital signature?

A) No, the GSA RETA user who initiates the request for signatures will receive an automatic email only after all digital signatures have been captured. A weekly report will be produced by the RETA Business Line Team and distributed to any GSA RETA User who initiated a digital signature package 10 or more days ago where one or both signatures have not yet been captured.

Q23) Will customer agencies stop receiving receipt letters with this new process?

A) When submitting Work Requests in eRETA, the system will send an automated email back to you once GSA has reviewed your request and assigned a GSA project manager. For RWAs where the customer agency does not use eRETA and instead continues to interact with GSA in the “old fashioned way” (i.e. emailing an RWA request, talking to a PM in the field, etc), GSA will continue to issue the Receipt Letter in those cases to confirm to the customer that we have received their request.

Q24) If we list ourselves as a POC, will we also receive the final RWA with the customer's signature and GSA's signature via email?

A) If you are one of the many POCs on the RWA (Agency POC, Agency Mailbox, Agency Billing POC, or Fund Certifying Official) you will receive a copy of the customer letters (e.g. Acceptance Letter) along with a copy of the signed RWA 2957 Form - this is protocol in each GSA region to send the customer letters PLUS the RWA form to all customer POCs listed on each RWA.

6/1 Session Q&A

Q1) Will GSA require customers to use digital signatures in eRETA in the future?

A) GSA employees are required to use digital signatures in eRETA. However, GSA has not yet decided if or when customers will be required to do so.

Q2)How much quicker is this method vs. what we use now?

A)This fully automated process has obvious advantages, especially considering the digital signature is required on the GSA side, as GSA will automatically receive the RWA after the customer signs. Additionally, it sends the notification to the signatory authority on the customer's end without any additional steps or emails from the customer, so this automation saves a considerable amount of time.

Q3) Is there a dual signature option for the customer, i.e. two spots for a customer to sign if they need more than one approving official's signature?

A) There is the potential for GSA to add that feature (two customer signature options) in the future, so we'll let you know when/if that happens.

Q4) Is the RWA automatically sent back to GSA once the customer approving official signs? Some agencies have their approving official sign and then send it to HQ for funding approval. Once that happens, then they route it to GSA. Must that process change with the new digital signature functionality?

A) The process would continue to work the same regardless if the customer signs manually digitally. The customer's accounting office would still give its approval before management applied its signature. To sign digitally, the customer's accounting office would still review and give their approval, once they did, the customer could either have their management sign the RWA (manually as usual) or send the RWA to GSA with a “request to digitally sign” in block 18C. Once GSA completes page of the RWA form,

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GSA will then route the RWA to the agency's management to digitally sign.

Q5) After the approving official signs an RWA, is there a way to update the information for the approving official five years later (so RWA Closeout letters are sent to the new person performing this job)?

A) Customers or GSA can update various contacts in eRETA or RETA at any time. GSA typically issues the customer letters (Receipt, Acceptance, Completion, and Closeout) to all GSA and customer POCs listed on the RWA at the time of the letter issuance. If an original contact is no longer involved with the RWA, it would be appropriate to remove their name and replace it so the new individual receives communications regarding the RWA. It should be noted that if the Customer Fund Certifying Official and/or the GSA Approving Official names are changed on any RWA amendment, new signatures WILL be required to make those changes - even if nothing else on the RWA is changing.

Q6) Will this session be recorded or presented at another time so other decision makers can participate?

A) Yes it will be made available at www.gsa.gov/ces as well as www.gsa.gov/ereta.